within this precinct, one a Norman chapel, engraved by Cotman; the other an exchequer, principally of the later period of ogival art. Here, on S. George's day, 1418, our Henry V. celebrated the festival of the saint, and held a chapter of the order of the Bath, at which twelve knights were created. As I walked along the ramparts, I looked down upon the roofs, and terraces, and gardens of the houses beneath, and my curiosity and wonder were highly excited by beautiful and picturesque dwellings that were perceptible here and there. I immediately threaded my way down the narrow streets that led from the castle, and many a carved wooden over-hanging front, many a striking interior, rewarded my curiosity, as I passed in and out unobstructed, almost unobserved, in the bustling din of the every-day business carrying on. Here is quite a mine of novelty, that would completely illustrate the domestic manners of the middle ages, opening to us novel features and unexpected varieties of detail.

But I must turn your attention to the public institutions. Immediately attached to the Church of S. Pierre, is an herb market, on one side of which passes the principal street of the town, called, I believe, that of S. Jean. The façade of the Hotel le Valois immediately faces the market next the street, and is directly opposite the flank of the church of S. Pierre. This fine building, of the Renaissance style, has a central court about 50 feet square, around which are halls and rooms, of late years appropriated (as I understood) to the meetings of the merchants as an Exchange, the Tribunal of Commerce, and other like purposes. It was erected in the sixteenth century. The front to the market-place has eight divisions, separated by attached columns in two storeys, raised on pedestals, and the cornices over profiled to correspond. An arched way leads into the court near the east end; and this feature is curious, as over it was once an equestrian statue of heroic size, such as we find in the Chateau of Blois, alluded to by Mr. Crace in his paper read last session; and as also existed over the archway of the Tribunals at Mechlin, and in other edifices of like character erected at that period. Each side of the court is decorated with handsome attached columns, niches, statues, highly-decorated windows—the uppermost of which are remarkably fine dormer ones, surmounted by gable-ends, finials, &c. In one angle of the court is an open pavilion leading to a circular-newelled staircase of stone, with its landings handsomely adorned with dressings to the doors, panelled pilasters, and friezes filled with sculpture; it leads up to an open pavilion at the top, from which is a dazzling sight of lofty elegant chimney-shafts, dormers, turrets, and other details, recalling the picturesque varieties and fancies of Blois and Chambord.

This is but one out of many revival buildings which might worthily illustrate the peculiar arrangements and taste of that period. Cotman, also, (vol. ii. p. 701 gives one of the many beautiful small fronts of houses not unfrequent at Caen, and offering most appropriate authorities for the domestic architecture of the Gothic style.

Attached to the church of S. Etienne is a public seminary, at which 700 or 800 youths receive a very superior education—326 residing in the college: there is a public library of 40,000 volumes in the Hotel de Ville, in which building is also a museum of 200 pictures, several of which are by distinguished masters. The Palace of the University is a building more remarkable for its very good taste than for its size. There are several fine lecture-rooms in it, and a museum of natural history. On an open terrace in front, next the street, are bronze statues of Malherbe and Laplace, raised on pedestals. Opposite to the University, the College of the Arts—a new building of the present prevalent style, bordering on the Renaissance,—completes the educational establishments of the town. It has a handsome entrance and inner vestibule, with niches, in which are placed bronze busts of many of the celebrated men of France. A Civil and Military Hospital, attached to the Church of [illegible], and a very large hospital for the [illegible] lower part of the town, attest the [illegible] sympathy of the city for the poor, [illegible]rate, and afflicted.

[illegible] several learned and useful societies established at Caen, for studying the antiquities, the history, the commerce, the agriculture of the department of Calvados, and for promoting the study of divinity and of the useful sciences, as law, medicine, &c. Each has its suitable appointments, and the zeal of the learned maintains the reputation of the studies and researches of the enthusiastic lovers of those pursuits.

Allusion has recently been made in The Builder to inscriptions on buildings: there is one over the door of the cloister of the Convent of the Carmelites in Caen. Perhaps I may be excused in alluding to it, although not immediately an architectural subject. The lines are these in honour of Simon Stock, one of the saints of the order:—

D Di Si scap ac ab as
um vus mon ulare cepit tris
T Sæ Dæ ul in ſu an

To which I may perhaps be permitted to join the following parallel free version:—

W ho Si first beg pr
hen ly mon an his eaching
T wi De bowled to sc t

Such, then, is a faint glimpse at Caen, its quarries and monuments, the fruits of a hurried visit of some thirty hours in the short and gloomy days of January, 1848. This town is a mine of fruitful thought to the most experienced—a treasury of useful examples to the student, wherein the taste may be improved, the imagination excited, and one's constructive knowledge increased. It deserves as many weeks of careful investigation, as I bestowed hours of passing attention. I well know that many of my hearers have visited this city; I trust I may induce a few now present, who may not have done so, to go and see what I have described so inadequately; and I shall be delighted if what I have said may procure to others the gratification which I myself experienced in visiting the capital of a people with whom we were once so intimately connected, and with whom we still have in common so many historical reminiscences.

A FEW WORDS ON ARRAS.

Arras is a large city on the line of the Chemin-du-fer du Nord, about 7 or 8 hours' journey from Paris, and is one of those fortified places with which the genius of Vauban has bristled the north-western frontier of France, so as to defend it, at least for a time, from the approaches of an invading army. It is one of the principal towns of the Artois.

The Hotel de Ville faces a handsome Place, or market-place, of considerable size, occupying one of the sides: the other three have a colonnade as high as the shop floor, and about 6 or 7 feet wide: the fronts of the houses are supported by the columns, as the Piazza of Covent Garden, with the fronts immediately over the arcades. Each narrow front rises four or five stories high, and the gable end towards the market, has a semicircular top, so that the range has a varied, palatial, and picturesque aspect, and was probably erected in the seventeenth century. The Hotel de Ville is gothic, of the usual municipal character, similar to that of the Belgian towns, and quite distinct from an ecclesiastical aspect: like them, there is a lofty perforated spire rising to a towering height, an object seen from a distance of many leagues as you approach the city. One corner of the Hotel de Ville is peculiarly attractive, being of the period of François I.; all the details designed with great purity, and executed with the utmost delicacy. And here I would pause and offer an observation or two on this period of architecture, as I have had occasion to refer so frequently this evening to the style of the Renaissance, and to express my admiration of the numerous and admirable examples found in France, whether seen at Caen, at Arras, Fontainebleau, Chambord, Blois, Ecouen, or Paris. The revival architecture of France is very superior to that of England, both in design and execution. With us it is too generally rudely designed, though picturesque and varied in outline. But in France the love of the ornate, with which the voluptuousness of form, the interpenetrating intricacy and flowing lines of the Flamboyant had imbued the people, made them desire in its immediate successor, the Renaissance, all the same brilliancy of effect. The French architects then evidently went to Italy, the native soil of ancient art, and studied the new taste among the classic monuments at that time more numerous than now. They seized the spirit of the best examples, and, adopting the mere masses of Gothic buildings, covered them with the most refined details of Roman art; the one adapting itself to the other with plastic facility. This superiority of education, this mastery of drawing, this refinement in the selection of ornament, invest the Renaissance with a character that places it on a par with that of any style, ancient or modern. Reflecting the tastes of two periods, combining them with a skill that gives the impress of an original creation, it pleases the eye and satisfies the judgment. Playful yet correct, graceful yet solid; adapted to the humblest purposes, appropriate for the highest; I consider it equal to the cinquecento of Italy, far superior to that bastard style prevalent here during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., and too generally the production of vulgar, uneducated minds, unenlarged by foreign travel or acquaintance with the high models of antiquity. The execution alone in England is too often barbarous; so low that, now-a-days Dutch rubbish has been imported and greedily purchased, by the so-called lovers of Elizabethan art. Our friends, Mr. l'Anson and Mr. Crace, in last session, and Mr. Poynter, on a former occasion, have so ably treated on this subject, that I shall now proceed to resume our excursion through Arras.

In the centre of the smaller Place was once a Gothic building, I forget now for what special purpose destined, but I see it indicated upon a small plan of a volume on the table, containing plans of most of the fortified cities of France. And on that plan also appear several other noble Gothic churches and public edifices, swept away by the Revolution. As you turn round a street, at the further end of the Place of the Hotel de Ville, one is quite surprised to find that it opens upon another more extensive Place, still similarly surrounded by large buildings—the variety of the façades and loftiness and size of the edifices giving it an air of great magnificence. A curious historical event is connected with this Place:—One of the Counts d'Artois had his title in succession likely to be disputed, as he had no son. His countess was announced to be in such a state "as women wish to be who love their lords." People were incredulous, for his enemies circulated the report that the countess was not likely to give an heir to her lord, and that it had been got up to cover a fraudulent substitution of a son. The count, as the reputed time of his lady's confinement approached, had a magnificent tent pitched in the centre of the *grande place*, the countess was removed thither, the nobles of the country and the city authorities were summoned at the critical hour, and the countess, in their presence and that of the burgesses who chose to come in, became a mother to a young prince.

In another part of the town is a large church, in the Italian style, admirably designed and executed, the nave being divided from the side aisles by massive Corinthian columns, instead of piers, with impressive effect. To the church is attached a noble establishment, once the residence of the Benedictine brothers of the monastery. It was built some 150 years since, in the style then prevalent. Its façade is some 10 or 12[illegible] feet long, facing a garden. In the body of the building are three large courts, two surrounded by arched cloisters, opening into spacious halls, now appropriated to lecture-rooms for clerical students. The Bishop of Arras, now a cardinal, has his palace in another portion of the building, and a considerable extent is appropriated to a fine public library, a museum, as also a picture gallery, containing some very fine paintings, purchased by the government at the annual exhibitions of the Louvre, and presented to the town. Here, then, we find at Arras, as at Caen, a college, educational institutions, a public library of tens of thousands of volumes, a museum, a fine theatre, in fact, every establishment calculated to refine, instruct, and amuse the inhabitants, and to receive and cure them when visited by disease and sickness. Where can we name English provincial towns where the same facilities for instruction and improvement are provided by the central or local government? A Parisian, it is said, is apt to exclaim, *Paris, c'est la France*; and when he points to his noble public monuments, as

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